PERIODICO EN ESPAÑOL ADENTRO

CHALLENGE

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

Volume 51 No. 23 November 20, 2019 suggested donation $1

KKKOPS & MTA ATTACK YOUTH

SHUT DOWN CAPITALIST LINE!

BROOKLYN, NOVEMBER 1— Over 1,000 protestors, including members and friends of Progressive Labor Party (PLP), illegally took to the streets of Brooklyn to fight the racist New York Police Department's terrorism directed at Black youth in the subways. After marching in the streets for more than an hour, the protestors did a mass fare evasion action and took over one of the busiest subway stations in Brooklyn while chanting "How do you spell racist? N-Y-P-D" and "No NYPD in the MTA!"

Cops protect profit

It's inspiring to see workers and students break the bosses' laws and attack racism with militant, multiracial unity. But it's not enough to get the kkkops out of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). Police everywhere protect the bosses and their capitalist system, and racism is its backbone. Wherever fighting against police terror, we must also organize for communist revolution.

Liberal Governor Andrew Cuomo recently announced the hiring of 500 more cops to terrorize workers, particularly Black and Latin youth, for evading the $2.75 subway and bus fare. The MTA has plastered stations with messages that pit workers against one another and spread the lie that less fare evasion means better service.

While the MTA claims it will lose $260 million from fare evasion this year (CBS, 6/18), it plans to lay off 2,700 MTA workers (Daily News, 7/17) while splurging an additional $663 million on policing in the next decade (City and State NY, 10/28).

Capitalism criminalizes youth

The MTA spends $9 million every single day to pay back debt to Wall Street, some of which dates back a century or more (ny.curbed.com, 10/2018). As shown by the recent installment of cameras in front of every turnstile in one Manhattan station, it is evident that the MTA cares about terrorizing workers more than providing quality transportation.

In late October, kkkops punched two Black teenagers during an altercation on a subway platform (The Hill, 11/1). In a separate incident, a teenager hopped the turnstile and was held at gunpoint by around a dozen kkkops who stormed his train car (The Huffington Post, 11/1). These incidents, along with the police murder of three Bronx residents earlier this month, sparked the uprising in Brooklyn.

The largely young and multiracial crowd chanted and gave speeches before taking the streets. Once in the streets, the march broke into a run at times, preventing the police from infiltrating the crowd. Bus drivers and motorists cheered us on. One worker carried a projector and projected phrases like "NYPD hands off our kids. Being broke is not a crime," and "NYPD out of subway" in gigantic letters onto buildings. Calls to ban the police from the subways and the chant that "we keep us safe"contain seeds of communist ideas: workers do not need the bosses or police. We can organize a communist society that serves the needs of the working class and ends racism once and for all. This mass outpouring of rage demonstrated that years of liberal rule under Mayor Bill de Blasio have not extinguished the will of workers and students to resist racist police attacks.

Liberal misleaders are trash

Despite these militant qualities, the march's leadership displayed dead-end politics, including instructions to segregate the crowd, breaking its multiracial character. White marchers were asked to form a perimeter around the sides and rear of the march, allowing Black, Latin and Asian workers to lead. Our multiracial PLP group stuck together, rejecting the illusion that "whiteness" will protect us from a police attack. While a few white marchers tried to implement such folly, most marchers remained united. Young PLP members led our section of the crowd in chants like "NYPD, KKK, how many kids have you killed today?" and "If we don't get it, shut it down!! Shut this racist system down."

When PLP chanted, "Don't vote! Revolt!" some marchers joined us, but a large portion was reluctant. Instead, many protestors shouted "One solution! Revolution!" That's what Bernie Sanders says. But his revolution involves voting and that's far from revolutionary.Leaders of the march come from neighborhood mass organizations that will be the foot soldiers for mayoral candidates against de Blasio's record of racist gentrification.

No election will change the reality of debt service, where the MTA funnels billions from the working class directly into the coffers of finance capital. Those who led today's march allow militant youth to hold up signs saying "revolution" as long as the movement funnels back to the ballot box on election day. To paraphrase Malcolm X, you don't have a revolution by begging the system of exploitation to integrate you into it.

Instead of voting let's fight back through our mass organizations: on CUNY campuses, in our unions, and in our churches against liberal Governor Cuomo and the MTA bosses racist attacks on workers and youth in the city. PL'ers will continue to raise the communist flag, and politicize workers and students vis-a-vis lousy service, fare hikes, and the racist fare beating campaigns that criminalizes mainly Black and Latin working class youth.

Cannot vote in justice

Workers cannot vote our way to justice. We need a communist revolution. The working class built every inch of the subway; it should be ours. Through communist revolution, we can take it back and build a world run by the international working class: a world without police, without racism, and without profit. Join us.✪

★**EDITORIAL** *Argentina: rise of liberal fascism...p2*

★**BOSTON** *Teachers strike and defy bosses' law...p3*

★**HAITI** *Crush Moise and his capitalist crisis...p4*

★**STRIKE WAVE** *same enemy same fight strikers rise above union divides...p5*

★**ECUADOR** *Abolish capitalism... p6*

★ **MTA** *workers must steer clear of liberal misleadership...p8*

OUR FIGHT

☆Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

☆The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

☆Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

☆While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

☆Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

☆Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

☆Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

☆Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☆Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

☆Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

CONTACT US

Email
desafio.challenge@gmail.com
Mail
Box 808 GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202
Internet
www.plp.org
challengenewspaper.wordpress.com
Twitter: @PLPchallenge
Facebook: Challenge Desafio

WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue $1. One Year: $20. Six months: $15. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202, November 20, 2019•Volume 51 No. 23

Editorial

Argentina: rise of liberal fascism

The liberal fascist Peronist Party regained power in the October 27 Argentinean elections, as workers once again had to choose between two anti-working-class options. In this case, "center-left" president-elect Alberto Fernandez beat the free-market incumbent, Mauricio Macri. Fernandez made vague nationalist promises to reform his way out of a worsening recession and out-of-control inflation. It's just the latest capitalist crisis in Argentina. Regardless of which political party happens to be in power, one thing is sure: the working class gets screwed.

Back on top, for the moment, is Vice President-elect and former president Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, the Peronists' star populist stooge. She will take office facing 11 cases of alleged bribery, embezzlement, and money laundering. In one case, her former chauffeur testified that he stashed 40 bags of money "in the mausoleum of Mrs. Kirchner's late husband and predecessor, Nestor, who died in 2010" (Telegraph, 10/27).

From the U.S. to China, from Ecuador to Honduras to Haiti to Iraq, the bosses are mounting "anti-corruption" campaigns to discipline their ranks and contain workers' anger. But since capitalist relations are rooted in individualism, it's impossible for the ruling class to completely stamp out self-interest. Moreover, capitalism is based on the theft of the value of workers' labor. It's inherently corrupt from the jump! Cristina Fernandez steals—whether legally or illegally under the bosses' laws—because that is what capitalists do. As one disillusioned former Macri voter told the New York Times, "I know they are all thieves, and I'm fed up of standing by while they all steal from me" (10/27).

Only a communist revolution can put an end to the bosses' criminality. Only communism can create a society run by and for workers—without money or exploitation, racism or sexism, imperialist rivalries or imperialist war. Only communism can point the way forward for the international working class.

The Pink Tide of poverty

In 2003, on the heels of an economic collapse triggered by the U.S.-dominated International Monetary Fund, Nestor Kirchner came into power. He rode the Latin American "Pink Tide," the same capitalist reform movement that elevated Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in Brazil and Hugo Chavez in Venezuela. Argentina's "left-wing" Peronists were elected after pledging to boost social spending and to end the austerity packages tied to massive loans from the IMF. Kristina Fernandez de Kirchner succeeded her husband as president in 2007 and was re-elected four years later.

For a time, conditions for workers in Argentina improved. Millions benefited from a new universal welfare program. More money was spent on pensions and unemployment benefits. Meanwhile, the Kirchners clamped down on the country's "traditional powers," including landowners and mainstream media, while subjugating judges and legislators. They subjugated the country's judges and legislators while tightening the state's control over industry—all hallmarks of rising fascism (Stratfor, 4/9/13). Meanwhile, their administrations took bribes for favors from industrialists like Paolo Rocca, "head of the conglomerate Techint Group and one of Argentina's richest men" (New York Times, 8/25/18).

In the aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2008, the Kirchners' protectionist, high-tariff policies no longer worked so well. As soy and beef prices plunged, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner cut back government spending and social services, which triggered mass layoffs. By 2015, her last year in office, "inflation levels were so high that Kirchner's government had altered official statistics" and "roughly a third of the population lived in poverty" (New Yorker, 8/28).

In the profit-driven chaos of capitalism, any gains made by workers are invariably limited and short-lived.

Fake-left frying pan, imperialist fire

Once the Kirchners' economic "miracle" lost its sizzle, the pro-market Macri campaigned on a "zero poverty" pledge and won office in 2015. He proposed widespread privatization and went all-in for foreign investment, heavy debt, and ultimately a $57 billion bailout from the IMF, the largest loan in that blood-sucking organization's 73-year history (Telegraph, 10/27).

Macri had wide support among business owners and big farmers, two sectors that have made China the country's second largest trade partner, surpassing the U.S. "Chinese investments in Argentina have multiplied in … mining, oil and gas, hydropower, nuclear energy, solar energy, biodiesel, transportation, telecommunications and electronics" (Argentine Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, 2017). Most recently, amidst the U.S.–China trade war, the two countries struck major commodity export deals, a loud warning to the U.S. of China's growing influence in Latin America (Reuters 9/10).

As favored bosses flourished, workers in Argentina found the new Macri reforms an even bigger disaster than the old Kirchner regime. When foreign investors failed to arrive, and the U.S. Federal Reserve hiked its interest rates, the peso lost more than half its value. The country's poverty rate is up to 35 percent, and 52 percent for children under 15 (Buenos Aires Times, 9/30). Without the Kirchners' lavish state subsidies, utility prices have gone through the roof. In September, thousands of protestors occupied downtown Buenos Aires to protest a food emergency. While Argentina is classed as "upper-middle-income" by the World Bank, it also ranks high for inequality, "slightly worse than the United States" (BA Times, 1/28/18).

As the Nazi-loving Juan Peron [see box], the notorious founder of Peronism, once said: "It is not that we were good, but those who came after us were so bad that they made us look good" (New Yorker, 8/28).

Latin America: hotspot for insurrection

Through much of Latin America, workers are taking to the streets in violent protest against decades of austerity, U.S. imperialism, and strangulation by the IMF. Massive demonstrations have broken out in Chile and Ecuador. A strike wave has erupted amid a challenged election in Bolivia. In Ecuador, protests against an end to fuel subsidies grew so intense that President Lenin Moreno fled Quito, the capital, and moved his government to the calmer city of Guayaquil.

As the history of Argentina shows, liberal bosses are the main danger. Capitalist reforms are deceptions that pave the way for fascism. The next global war is coming—and with it, sharper attacks on our class. As communists, we must support rebelling workers around the world. Most important of all, we must destroy capitalism with communist revolution, organized and led by the Progressive Labor Party. Join us!✪

Founding fascist father

As Eva Peron became a media darling and self-styled champion of the impoverished working class, her husband, Juan Peron, helped many Nazis fleeing Europe after World War II to find a safe haven in Argentina. Among them were mass- murdering fiends like Adolf Eichmann and Josef Mengele. Peron also offered a haven for German profits that were generated by the Nazi war machine (NYT, 4/4/2005).

Though Argentina was technically neutral when World War II broke out, there was broad support for the Axis powers—in part due to the country's large Italian and German communities, in part to a tradition of sanctioned anti-Jewish racism. Argentina refused Jewish immigration during the pre-war Nazi pogroms. Peron remained loyal to the defeated Third Reich throughout his presidency (1946-55 and 1973-74). He vehemently attacked the Nuremberg Trials, which held former high-ranking Nazis accountable for war crimes. He also worked with the Catholic Church to gain amnesty for refugee Nazis who'd settled in Argentina.

Strike potential

Workers protest hellish cuts

Mt. Sinai worker speaks out against cuts in front of Holy Cross Hospital

CHICAGO, OCTOBER 24 – Over a dozen multiracial workers and union organizers gathered in front of Holy Cross Hospital on the city's south side this morning to protest against racist cutbacks in healthcare. Days before, the owners of the hospital, Sinai Health System, announced drastic reductions to its services, including cutting the number of beds by more than half, closing units, and laying off workers.

Given the fact that Holy Cross is located in a majority Black and Latin working-class community, these cuts are racist to the core. They reflect the capitalist bosses' use of healthcare as a profit-making industry, one that makes decisions ultimately based on money and influence, not on workers' needs. Only by smashing the racist profit system of capitalism through a mass communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) can we ever guarantee the level of health the working class needs and deserves.

They say cut back,
we say fight back

On October 21, the racist Sinai bosses sprung the announcement on hospital workers about the cuts. They announced reducing the number of inpatient beds from 264 to just 110. They have indefinitely suspended the obstetrics and gynecology services. According to the bosses, the hospital has been operating at a monthly loss of $2 million dollars since the summer. Schwab Rehabilitation Hospital, also part of Sinai, is facing a similar mass reduction in beds (Chicago Tribune, 10/22).

Many of the Holy Cross workers reported being taken by surprise by the announcement. Some even said that they learned about potentially losing their jobs second-hand, through their coworkers. Some workers are being offered severance packages, while others will now be forced to travel to other Sinai locations just to keep their jobs.

At the main Sinai Hospital campus on the city's west side, many workers learned about the cuts to Holy Cross during contract negotiations with the bosses. A few hundred hospital workers here are organized through the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) healthcare local, including some PLP comrades. The bosses at the table just acted like it was no big thing, like having dozens and dozens of workers shuffled around to other buildings wouldn't affect the hours and job status of other workers.

SEIU scrambled to put together a press conference, but it was clear to it was too little, too late. There were more union organizers and press there than hospital workers. What's worse, they brought out some of the usual liberal politicians and religious misleaders who only care about making pretty speeches and securing some votes, but are always short on action when push comes to shove.

In contrast, those of us in PLP have been using the cuts as a rallying cry for workers on the necessity to build the struggle against the racist bosses and their attacks. Although it's Holy Cross and Schwab facing cuts today, if we as workers aren't organized, it could very well be the rest of us in the crosshairs in a month or year from now. Our coworkers are receptive to this line, as are they open to receiving CHALLENGE as we prepare for a potential strike of Mount Sinai and Schwab workers on November 11th.

Fascism and war threats grow

Sinai's decision to make the cuts at Holy Cross is part of a larger trend under capitalist healthcare. Throughout the U.S, larger hospital networks such as Sinai are buying up more local community hospitals, then imposing drastic cuts and even shuttering them altogether. When they bought Holy Cross in 2014, the Sinai bosses announced that they were going to convert it into a Level 1 trauma center that still remains desperately needed on the city's south side. Fast forward five years, and it now stands at risk of closing. To this end, it joins the ranks of MetroSouth and Westlake Hospital, two safety-net hospitals in the area that have faced closure within the last year (Patch, 7/29).

When the larger wealthier hospital systems cut services on a local level, they are forcing workers and their families to travel greater distances to receive care. These larger systems could then be less likely to accept public insurance such as Medicaid used by low-income workers, effectively cutting off much of their healthcare entirely.

From 2009 to 2014, the number of announced hospital consolidations in the U.S. doubled (nihcm.org). A hallmark of fascism (capitalism in crisis) is increasing amounts of monopolization among major industries. This, paired with the bosses' politicians of all stripes slashing social safety nets for workers in favor of funding their imperialist war machine for upcoming war against rivals China and Russia, could spell a very deadly future for workers.

Fight for a communist future

But fortunately for us, the future is not yet decided. By learning through our fight against the racist hospital bosses, we can build our fighting PLP and crush capitalism and its racist profiteering off workers' health. In its place, we can organize a collective communist society where we run all hospitals and clinics based on our needs.✪

Teachers strike and defy bosses' law

DEDHAM, October 25—A hundred-year-old law makes teachers' strikes illegal in Massachusetts. But Dedham teachers voted to strike anyway—248 to two. It's this kind of courage that the working class needs to challenge anti-worker laws and put workers on a fight-back footing.

Although reformist, strikes show the potential of working-class unity and strength. When education workers fight for better working conditions, they are in practice also fighting for better learning conditions for students.

Teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions

Dedham teachers struck for a strong anti-sexual harassment policy in the contract; for a better healthcare package; for wage increases to make up for the $4,000 per year healthcare deductible imposed in the previous contract; and for a system-wide policy to help students learn by cutting classroom cellphone use.

The teachers were also fed up with the arrogant disrespect from the administration.

Just as West Virginia teachers illegally struck last year, education workers must strike over what they and their students need, legal or not. Capitalist laws are written to keep workers down.

We communists in Progressive Labor Party (PLP) are fighting for workers' rule: a world free from exploitation and oppression. That means revolution and for that we need to break the bosses' laws.

Hundreds supported the strikers

Hundreds of union members from across the state, and many parents and students, attended a big support rally on October 26. PLP members walked the picket lines, and, in a small victory, met an educator who may work with us.

Not all issues were covered by the strike. Paraprofessionals and substitutes are poorly paid. And although paras and subs are on strike, they were not even able to vote to strike (they have a separate union).

The union must fight harder for the lowest-paid school workers including substitutes. Higher substitute pay would mean Dedham could hire enough subs, so teachers wouldn't have to cover classes for absent teachers.

A tentative agreement was drawn up after one day of striking, and the members were sent back to work before the proposed four year contract was ratified. The 10-15 percent raise over four years won't even cover the healthcare deductible. Such is the nature of union misleadership. They accept minor reforms and then funnel the rank-and-file back into the classroom.

Chicago teachers, who just ended an 11-day strike, have shown that fighting for students, demanding nurses and social workers in every school, fighting for services for immigrant and homeless students, is the way to win.

Parent-student-teacher unity is the key to fighting for decent schools! But in the capitalist system, reform victories can always be taken away. Winning means building the communist movement and the organization that embodies it, the PLP.✪

Crush Moise & his capitalist crisis

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI, OCTOBER 25—Students at the public and private universities, among others, marched through the streets of the capital city. For weeks on end, they have been engaging in increasingly militant fightback against the ruling class of Haiti, capitalism, and imperialism, which have brought worsening food shortages, unemployment and inflation to the already devastated working class here.

According to government reports (very skewed statistics that hardly show the breadth of the problem), at least 35 percent of workers in Haiti – over three million people – are facing a crisis when it comes to obtaining food (Miami Herald, 11/1). Every month, for one week at least, there's been a full-stop general strike, and uprisings all over. For the last seven weeks, there has been no respite. Everyone is demanding the resignation of president Jovenel Moïse and a change of system.

Throughout, as always, our Progressive Labor Party (PLP) comrades and friends have been active participants. However, our task as communists in PLP is to clarify that the masses don't need merely a change in the system—unless we specify that communism and an egalitarian society is the system that we want. We don't want legislative seats—we want state power!

"We've had enough of this system of exploitation!"

Throughout today's protests, the students and others confronted police, and armed and hooded paramilitary thugs who are responding with increasing violence. It has been reported that up to 700 demonstrators have been killed since the uprisings began last year.

The students attacked certain institutions which symbolize imperialist domination, like the Institut Français en Haiti (IFH). A bus belonging to the State University of Haiti, the vehicle used by the Dean of the School of Ethnology to run over a militant student, was burned. By the end of the day, the running battles had passed by the Law School, the School of Ethnology, and the main police station, where four students were arrested.

Alongside this march, several demonstrations were going on in different parts of the capital and in other towns. Neighbors of president Moïse told him to move out, since, they said, "We've never had thieves and criminals of your caliber in our neighborhood."

PLP was present to give revolutionary communist leadership, as we have become well known to many students and militants. We oriented our speeches towards attacking the bosses and the capitalist system. We handed out a leaflet blaming the imperialist countries for the poverty and misery of Haiti, and concluded correctly that Haitian workers and students need a communist revolution to end this misery once and for all.

We got very positive responses from those who read our literature and heard our chants. One worker responded with, ""Hey, that's good! A good leaflet. We have to upset the apple-cart (chauvirer la chaudière)." Another exclaimed, "We need another kind of state, a workers' state! We've had enough of the system of exploitation!"

Liberals try to fool workers

The struggle here increasingly taken on the character of struggle between classes. The names of the big bosses and their corporations are buzzing around; people are aware that these are the barons of the social, economic and political system—capitalism. Attacks on businesses and the marches into the corporate areas of Delmas, and into Pétionville, the center of the Haitian and international bourgeoisie, testify to this.

As always, there are politician fakers that are trying to take advantage of the anti-capitalist movement here. Many of these misleaders are the very same politicians who have been serving the ruling class and the imperialists in the government all along. They are also responsible for the deplorable conditions that workers and students in Haiti are facing.

In fact, at least four of them had recently been called to Washington to meet with the U.S. State Department to get their marching orders. These sellouts cannot be trusted to "change" anything. Many of the phony leftists are supporting these traitors because they are willing to accept a few reforms as they try to rob the workers of their militancy and lead them away from revolutionary communism.

Put capitalism in its grave with communist revolution

The economic and political crisis here in Haiti and everywhere can't be expected to improve as long as capitalism and imperialism exist. In fact, it can only be expected to get worse as economic crisis worsens around the world and the major imperialist powers like the United States, Russia, and China prepare themselves for the next global war.

As communists we need to continue winning the masses away from liberal fascism and towards the end of capitalism through violent revolution and workers' power. We can convert the class struggle into class war against the bosses. Then, our international PLP and its Red Army will be the force that finally puts this profit system of poverty, exploitation and war in its grave for good. ✪

Bronx: Forum builds worker-student unity

THE BRONX, November 5—Over 70 students, along with some faculty members, participated in a Fightback Forum about reform and revolution. It began with a panel discussion featuring the latest developments in the labor movement and concluded with a Q&A. The panels included reports from organizers on the GM autoworkers' strike, the 7K movement at the City University of New York (CUNY), and a young Progressive Labor Party (PLP) member who is both a student and organizer with homecare workers. The discussion was filled with student enthusiasm from the inspiring examples of militant fight-back.

From start to finish, the activity was led by students—from the details of serving food and signing up students to join Common Ground, a mass organization on campus (see CHALLENGE, 10/23), to what ideas would be emphasized in the forum. CHALLENGE was on every desk along with literature from the various struggles. The planning paid off as the event was seamless from start to finish, with revolutionary music, great participation from the students, and clear and sharp speeches from the panelists.

Student worker unity the way forward

The forum opened with a spirited introductory speech from a West African student who emphasized the need for international solidarity of the working class and who spoke about why CUNY students and workers have the same enemy, and have the same interest in fighting and uniting with other workers and students everywhere. He pointed out that whether it is in Puerto Rico, West Africa, or the South Bronx, workers are all being strangled by capitalist exploitation. He then introduced the first speaker, a UAW (United Auto Workers) organizer who shed light on the exploitation of autoworkers. He described how the bosses super-exploit temporary part-time workers (lower hourly wages than full-time workers, few or no benefits, no path to permanent jobs), and are amassing even higher record profits. He went on to discuss how workers

in different auto factories just organized a militant strike against the auto bosses and how they halted production in the plants, causing the bosses to lose profits.

Afterwards, a CUNY professor and "7K or Strike" (for a $7,000 salary/class) organizer delivered an inspirational speech about the super-exploitation of adjunct (part-time) college teachers, and organizing for a better contract for them. He connected the struggle for a better contract as not just for better working conditions but one that will improve conditions for students as well, making the important point that students' learning conditions are teachers' working conditions.

The final panelist closed the forum with a poignant account about homecare workers, and opened her talk with a powerful statement: "Workers fought for the eight hour workday in the 19th century. In the 20th, we won the 40-hour workweek and minimum wage laws. Sadly, in the 21st century, thousands of workers in the so-called progressive state of N.Y. work 24-hour workdays. For the last two years, I have been organizing with them."

She went on to describe the sexist and racist conditions homecare workers in New York face. For example, the mostly Black, Latin and immigrant women work 24-hour shifts and are only paid for 13 of those hours. She emphasized the historical and present-day leadership of women in fighting for shortening the workday.

Future working class leaders learn communist politics

The panelists did a great job of showing that capitalism is the problem. This was reflected in the comments that followed. One student asked whether the panelists believed we need a new system, given the worsening conditions workers are facing across the board. Another student asked whether we saw an end to these injustices in sight, and whether we would achieve equality in our lifetime. All the panelists replied that while workers must continue to fight against the system, capitalism can never meet workers' needs. In order for us to end the horrors of sexism, racism, exploitation, and inequality, we need to fight for a society that is run by working people—communism. Only then can we meet our needs. Overall, students were very receptive to our ideas.

One young woman remarked, "I am so glad you all opened my eyes to what's going on. Now I know I have to do something!"

Through our newly formed group, Common Ground, we have been involving students in the fight-back campaigns on campus, whether it is about raises for part-time faculty, the lack of services on campus, or the deportations of workers in our community and students in our schools. We will continue to distribute CHALLENGE, and encourage them to attend PLP study groups. Our goal is to organize students not only to see themselves as the future workers in our society, but also as the future leaders of working-class struggle, and armed with communist ideas, to be the force that will eventually lead us out of this capitalist hell, and into a bright future under communism.✪

Colombia: communist school analyzes wage slavery

COLOMBIA NOVEMBER 4,–Recently Progressive Labor Party (PLP) organized a revolutionary communist political school in Colombia, which some of our friends and CHALLENGE readers attended. There were good discussions about racist unemployment, sexism, wage slavery, nationalism, and all the horrors of capitalism; and why we need to build a great social base for communism.

Many participated with spirited political discussions. Several workers and students showed great leadership potential to continue advancing our cadre to a new revolutionary leadership in the construction of the PLP.

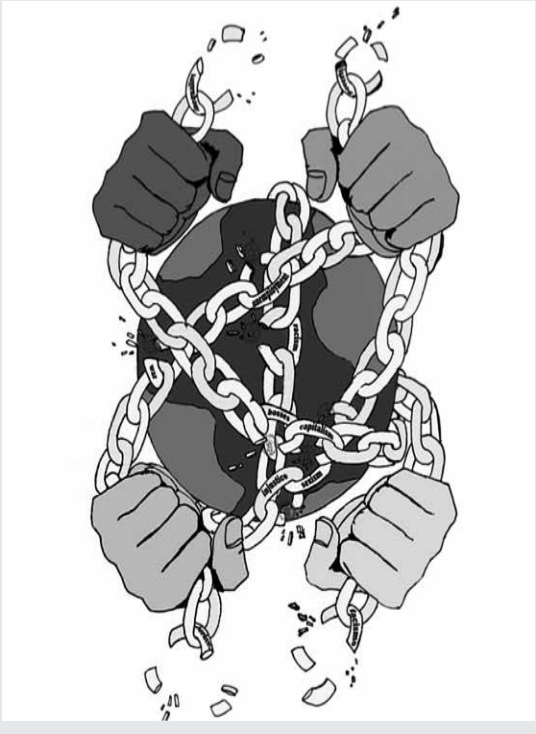
In the workshops, many discussed their understanding about unemployment, its moral impact on working families, and how under capitalism, unemployment is inevitable, its relation to anti-immigrant nationalism and the war against the workers, and the need for working class unity always, but especially during this period of capitalist crisis.

We discussed the construction of a political base in different organizations, analyzing the imperialist contradictions, where the liberal wing pretends to be friendly and a benefactor to the working class. Our conclusion was that we need to struggle to create study groups and to distribute CHALLENGE.

These are the main points of the discussion on "wage slavery":

- Capitalism can't provide full employment because of its internal contradictions and the benefits it gets from unemployment.
- Even though the working class is the majority, it is ruled by a minority. The bourgeois state and its legislative apparatus lies, cheats and steals the value that workers created through their labor in order to stay in power.
- Capitalists create an army of unemployed workers and keep them divided by racism, individualism, and nationalism.
- We need to fight for communist internationalism by supporting workers struggles all over the world.

We need to build our communist line and PLP among rural and city workers, students, and soldiers. This is because it is the only way we can destroy the bosses' system of exploitation and wage slavery. The capitalist system cannot fulfill workers' needs; it only brings misery, hunger, police brutality, bad health, and the destruction of nature. ✪



same enemy, same fight

Strikers rise above union divides

PHILADELPHIA—As part of a larger fight back against General Motors, several Progressive Labor Party (PLP) comrades and dozens of other workers joined striking United Auto Workers (UAW) outside a distribution plant in Philadelphia last month in a demonstration of solidarity. Even though this strike has come to an end, there are important lessons we can take away. Mainly, that workers need to take a step further than striking for better conditions, and smash this capitalist system with communist revolution!

Workers must fight back together

Workers from numerous fields came out to support the strikers and emphasized the interconnectedness of everyone's struggle, acknowledging that the General Motors strike was an action that could benefit all workers. CUNY faculty and staff organized in the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) union pointed out that some of the biggest struggles professors are facing are strikingly similar to those that pushed GM workers to strike: unfair treatment of part-time workers, and poor health care benefits. As one worker put it, "your fight is our fight." Same enemy, same fight!

Bosses will do anything to divide the working class. Some of the striking workers seemed to — for the moment— buy into the racist "America First" narrative and expressed a desire for General Motors to move production back to the United States. However, workers also expressed empathy for their sisters and brothers in Mexico, saying they "didn't blame them at all" for being upset at recent General Motors layoffs that occurred in Mexico. They also commended Mexican GM workers who refused to work overtime in response to the strike.

It's the role of communists in PLP to sharpen the internationalist aspect of this contradiction and win auto workers from the U.S. to Mexico into PLP!

The workers also rejected the capitalist notion that some workers deserve more pay than others. In response to lower salary caps for new workers, one striker explicitly stated, "We don't care if someone new is making the same as us older workers, even if it's not what we were paid when we started. We are glad for them." A young worker expressed dismay that he was getting paid more than his part-time coworkers, even though they do the same work. Another added that the bosses lie about how much money GM workers make to turn the community against them, a strategy also used against MTA workers and teachers.

Black workers key to revolution

Workers were positioned at two different entrances, one for managers and one for employees. Some comrades noticed that white workers were stationed at the more comfortable manager entrance, which had a larger shelter, while young Black workers were stationed near the employee entrance by the highway, a location some called "dangerous." This served as an important reminder that even within a significant action of worker solidarity, workers must be vigilant to ensure multiracial unity.

Three PL'ers spoke to one of the Black strikers at the employee entrance, who told us that they chose this entrance because of the flow of traffic and that they had requested more support to no avail. This is why we say Black workers are key to revolution. These young Black workers were strategic in reaching the community of their fightback instead of opting for the more comfortable picketing station. Despite his worry that he was "not that experienced," we urged him to take more of a leadership role and exchanged contact info.

The fight for communism marches forward

As comrades began to leave, some of the workers expressed that they hoped their strike would mean that others would not have to strike. A comrade sharply pointed out that the fight will not be over after this strike. He remarked that the ruling class will continue to attack workers. Another worker similarly expressed that we need a "wave of struggle." The contradiction between boss and worker cannot be destroyed without communist revolution.

When the strike ended, the Black worker we contacted feared that GM workers went on strike "for nothing." A PL'er disagreed and stressed to the worker the importance of learning about the union's corruption, the courage of workers, and how far we need to go. What we are fighting for cannot be given to us; it can only be taken. This system will never allow us to live as comfortably as the rulers who exploit us.

When asked, "don't you think it would be better if workers ran everything and we got rid of bosses?" a young striker replied that his bosses "do nothing. We could run the plant without them." The international working class does not need bosses. Through communist revolution, we can build a world where workers run everything for ourselves.✪

GM and the UAW have announced a tentative agreement to end the strike. Now the 49,000 GM workers have to vote to accept or reject it. It's a huge sellout that closes three plants in Baltimore, MD, Warren, MI, and Lordstown, OH. Despite the main demand of the strike to eliminate the use of Temporary Part Timers, the agreement allows them to work for three years, with no limits or protection, before being hired. The agreement cuts the wage progression to top pay from eight years to four, and eliminates the Tier-2 cap. Many workers are angry and prepared to stay out on strike, despite already being out for five weeks.

One worker speaking for many said, "So, we went to our [union] meeting this morning…My vote stays the same, a big fat 'No!"

In 2008 President Barack Obama bailed out General Motors by screwing the workers. Now it's 2019 and GM is reaping record profits and the workers are being handed a contract that will screw them again. The capitalist treadmill of exploitation of the working class will continue until we end it once and for all with communist revolution. Join us!

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Ecuador: abolish capitalism

ECUADOR–During the first few days in October, the world witnessed the militant fightback of workers here. This is not the first time, and it won't be the last, as long as capitalism and its lethal exploitation and violence exists. As hundreds of thousands of workers took to the streets, repression and violence from the state came down hard on them. The brutal repression left 11 protesters dead, 1,300 injured and about 1,500 arrested.

The protests were sparked by the new package of measures taken by the government after making deals with the IMF (International Monetary Fund) for loans of up to $10 billion. There were preconditions established in order for the Ecuadoran government to get access to the loans. And the administration of president Lenin Moreno wrote decree 883, which canceled all government subsidies to gasoline, increasing the price of "extra," the cheapest grade of gasoline, by $0.23, and diesel by $1.07.

Other measures on the "paquetazo" as it was called, were: Vacation time cut in half and one day's work without pay for all public employees, cuts in retirement and social security benefits, workers "probation period" and salary to be determined by the employer.

When decree 883 was presented, the bosses who own the transportation buses and who are organized into "associations" linked to the rightwing parties here, ordered "their" workers to go on strike. The transportation bosses just wanted the subsidies to gasoline and diesel, they were not concerned about the attack on the workers.

But then the indigenous movements joined the struggle, and the demonstrations became more militant, yet the demands did not change much, very little attention was paid to the attacks on workers' benefits or salaries. The transportation bosses led the discourse: stop the price hike on gasoline.

What victory?

As the indigenous groups descended into Quito and Guayaquil, the two of the largest cities in Ecuador, the rightwing parties begin their racist attacks against the demonstrators, calling them looters, vandals, foreigners, violent thugs and more. Jaime Nebot Saadi, ex-mayor of Guayaquil, whose party is still in power, said that the indigenous people belong in the moor (wasteland), not in Guayaquil. The bosses were so scared of the militant indigenous groups that the violence became more obvious and extreme.

During this period, the bosses' press only reported that the protesters wanted to stop the hike on gasoline prices, ignoring completely the attacks on labor in the paquetazo—20 percent decrease in pay, vacation time cut in half, one day's work without pay for all public employees. Other demands of the masses included respect for sacred lands, and indigenous rights, ridiculing the bosses' racist patriotic babble.

These demands, reformist in nature, were still ignored by the bosses' press. It is important to note that workers need to unite and rely on each other only. We must unite on the basis of class only. Anything less leaves workers open to being co-opted by identity politics.

On October 13, the government was forced to negotiate with the leaders of the movement, the transportation bosses and indigenous leaders. The demand was: rescind decree 883 and the immediate resignation of the Minister of Government and of Defense.

One of the leaders of the indigenous umbrella organization, CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador), said, "If Decree 883 is not revoked, we will stand firm and united… with our common and unwavering commitment to defend our people."

Once the government agreed to revoke the decree, most people begin calling this a victory, yet one disappointed worker said, "They presented us with such a wicked and criminal pocket of demands that revoking decree 883 seems like a victory we all should be thankful for." What is the "victory"? The government is preparing a new decree, and the Minister of Government has said she will not resign.

Lessons from this struggle for workers

There are a couple of key lessons from this struggle: First, the bosses tremble when the working class is united and fighting. They know that with the correct political line, they can be overthrown. That is why they use racism and sexism, patriotism and nationalism to divide us. Second, the Progressive Labor Party's line of struggling with the working class to fight directly for communism is the correct line. The bosses will always find ways to reverse or take away the "victories."

That is why we need to smash the bosses and their lackeys once and for all. In order to end the lethal violence of the capitalist system, we need to build a society of workers for workers: communism. Long live communism!J

New comrades for the fight for communism

Some members of our Progressive Labor Party club have been working in an immigrant community organization for over 15 years. We have participated in hundreds of meetings, campaigns, press conferences and protests with members of the organization. We try not to miss opportunities to express aspects of PLP'S line and to stand up to anticommunism or divisive identity politics. Sometimes we are timid, back down and then struggle out our weaknesses in the PLP club.

We have led workshops, fighting the community organization leadership position that we couldn't lead such workshops in the organization's space. On one occasion we opened barricades at a protest against police killing of Black and Latin workers. We regularly distribute and write for CHALLENGE and have some workers who take extra papers.

There are many ups and downs in our Party work requiring us to get better at criticism and self-criticism. We try to move ahead during down times.Significantly we have organized a PLP study group over the years with workers. At a recent study group, four joined PLP and one more joined recently at a City communist school.

Our club's plan is to discuss the Party's analysis of the world situation and begin the study of dialectical materialism, the philosophy of revolutionary communism. We will plan together with our new comrades on how they can contribute and become communist leaders in the immigrant organization we're all in.

★★★★★

Organize sanitation, dump the bosses

A press conference was held in the park in front of the New York City Hall, convened by a union which is trying to organize sanitation workers employed by private companies in the city.

These companies steal astronomical figures of money every year while their workers earn miserable wages through super-exploitation. The workers are subjected to work in terrible conditions, in trucks that are in poor condition and pollute the city, which also connects this union campaign to the fight against climate change.

In the city garbage dumps, where one can find some of the worst working conditions, the workers are mostly undocumented immigrants. Many of them have suffered terrible accidents and others have died due to the lack of safety measures in the workplace and in most cases those accidents and deaths have gone unpunished. This is clearly another racist attack of capitalism.

This press conference was attended by some workers of that union as well as a coalition of community organizations. Another PLP comrade and I were also present. Several reformist capitalist politicians from the city council were there too. These misleaders are in favor of a bill that would be discussed by the city council, which if approved and signed by Mayor Bill de Blasio, will supposedly regulate this multimillion dollar industry.

As always, these capitalists are playing with the workers by offering them crumbs to maintain control over them. My comrade and I presented the other workers there communist ideas through CHALLENGE newspaper, getting out fifteen copies. The only way to overcome exploitation and climate destruction is revolution. We must fight for seizure of power and the construction of communism, directed by the REVOLUTIONARY AND COMMUNIST PLP, in whose society all needs are met equally.

★★★★★

I was proud to support strikers

I felt proud to show worker solidarity with striking UAW local 677 at the Mack Truck plant in Macungie, Pennsylvania, a state where some 6,000 workers were on strike (see article, page 5). The plant was huge, a few blocks long. There were about 12 groups of eight pickets at various entrances. I visited four of the groups and workers were so appreciative; we shared labor stories and took pictures. I brought bagels and cream cheese and we toasted the increasing strike wave. We acknowledged that labor leadership is very weak. There was constant horn honking of support as cars and trucks drove by. The pickets were all ages, some with grey hair but mostly 20s and 30s. They were white, Black and Latin, about 20 percent women.

It seems that this union solidarity is not common these days, but is so rewarding and needs to be done more. Workers' struggles need our support. I had several friends ready to go again but the strike was settled before we could visit. I have been in communication with one striker who told me that the members of the union have not even had a meeting on the details of the contract. She said that the negotiators felt it was good enough to temporarily suspend the strike.

This lack of transparency is part of the union leadership's program to prevent the rank and file from controlling their union. The union hacks do not trust workers to do their bidding.

★★★★★

History: Battle of Cable Street

Half a million workers chased out fascists

October 4 marked the 83rd anniversary of a great battle against fascism — the "Battle of Cable Street" in London's East End. In 1936, under communist leadership, British and immigrant workers broke the ranks of the cops, who protected the fascists, and smashed the fascist attempt to march and freely organize in working-class districts.

The constant communist-led, anti-fascist organizing over many years led to the understanding and empowerment of the working class. This battle also shows that the working class should never give in to nationalist leaders. Both Jewish and Irish community and religious leaders tried to convince the masses not to fight the fascists, fearful of "causing more problems."

For 300 years, the East End of London had been the home of poor working class immigrants. In 1936 the area's population was largely Polish and Russian Jewish, Irish Catholics and non-immigrant English workers.

In the midst of a severe depression, Sir Oswald Moseley's Blackshirts movement (BUF, British Union of Fascists) was growing among the unemployed, white-collar workers and small businessmen. Moseley sent committed fascists into the East End to beat up and terrorize Jewish, made scapegoats for the economic crisis. On the streets, fascists would scream "kill the k…."

Ruling class funds the fascists

Many of Britain's upper and ruling class funded the BUF. Some of Britain's big newspapers, such as the Daily Mail, Evening News and Sunday Dispatch, promoted the BUF. The recently crowned King Edward VIII had wealthy fascist friends in Britain, France and Germany. The police often turned a blind eye to the fascists' beatings of Jewish workers.

Moseley decided to show his strength by marching 10,000 uniformed Blackshirts and thousands of supporters directly through the Jewish/Irish neighborhood. The police commissioner Sir Philip Game ordered his cops to support the march.

On October 4, 10,000 cops were assigned to protect Mosley's fascists. The official Jewish "leadership" advised Jewish workers to stay indoors and not show aggressiveness towards the cops.

But up to 500,000 people from the East End and other parts of London came out to stop the fascist march. Communists and trade unionists, many themselves Jewish, led the attack on the fascists in the streets. At Cable Street, the police, armed with nightsticks, attacked, while mounted police charged the crowd. Horses stumbled because children were hurling marbles under their hoofs and bursting bags of pepper under their noses. Women threw the contents of chamber pots from windows.

The fascists screamed derogatory names for Jewish workers. But the people chanted, "They will not pass!"

Jewish, Irish dockers unite

The masses erected barricades. A truck was turned on its side to block the street; old mattresses, bricks and pushcarts were thrown on top. An Irish anti-fascist bus driver drove his double-decker bus across the road, forming a barricade between the police and the anti-fascists.

The army of fascists demanded the police escort them through the masses of workers. At Cable Street, the massive wall of workers held their ground and only backed off to pick up bricks or bottles to throw at the cops and fascists.

The fascists were under a constant hail of bricks, bottles and stones. Despite arresting over 100 anti-fascist fighters, still the police could not move the masses as they held the cops in a vise grip.

Eventually, the Police Commissioner canceled the BUF's march. But now the police had to save them from being killed by the crowd. They attempted to escape. But the anti-fascists, waiting for them, shouted, "Get them!" and crashed through the police lines. They then chased the fascists out of London's East End.

For days, people celebrated throughout London. The fascists continued to try to organize, but it was clear that workers wouldn't be easily won to fascism.

Dare to struggle — Dare to win!✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Dishonest Abe

NYT, 10/21 — Abraham Lincoln, during the Lincoln-Douglas debates in 1858…[said], "There is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality."

Protesters Flood Baghdad

NYT, 10/27 — Masked and black-clad security forces fired barrages of pepper spray, tear gas and sound bombs into crowds of anti-government protesters in a central Baghdad square…timing their assault…to a shutdown of electricity that left the area in…darkness.

The demonstrators — who gathered…after dozens were killed in similar protests over joblessness, corruption and a lack of official accountability….The…death toll from the past two days stood at about 60…

The anti-government demonstrations began in early October…after security forces had killed nearly 150 protesters nationwide…Iraq has lurched from one crisis to another over the past 16 years since the U.S.-led invasion….

The sense of urgency only grew as protesters appeared ready to endure a long stay in central Baghdad, setting up tents and equipping themselves with masks and…goggles to protect against tear gas."People are bringing us more water and food…giving us the incentive to stay," said a protester…

…in Amara province, people who shot the leader of one militia then followed him to the hospital to finish the job.

California fires expose wealth gap

NYT, 10/30 — California's catastrophic wildfires…have produced a spectrum of misery and recovery, ranging from the wealthy, who with insurance money rebuilt houses sometimes worth more than the ones that burned, to those who lost everything and years later have nothing.

Like access to quality education and clean water…disasters are another prism through which inequalities can be viewed…

Jenn Wilcox…narrowly escaped the uninsured cabin where she was living was destroyed. Her life is upside down…she lost her job and returned to her home state of Georgia where she is struggling to make ends meet….

"I'm a refugee." [she] said. "I'm broke..."

…About 60 percent of residents in [Lake[county lacked insurance…Insurers are raising rates in areas vulnerable to fire and…have declined to write policies."There's a lot of…poverty..."

…People with lower incomes were less prepared for…disasters and were more likely to become…homeless…Ms. Gina Wheeler moved into a trailer in a camp for fire survivors…where she must stretch a fixed income of $850 a month….to pay for food and gas….

"I can't even describe the empty feeling we have," [she] said. "I talk friends and family members out of suicide , and they talk me out of it."

U.S. interferes all the time

NYT, 10/21—The Central Intelligence Agency helped overthrow elected leaders in Iran and Guatemala in the 1950s and backed violent coups in several other countries in the 1960s. It plotted assassinations and supported brutal anti-Communist governments in Latin America, Africa and Asia. The C.I.A. has planted misinformation and, at times, used cash as a way to achieve foreign policy aims.

But experts have argued that modern American efforts are not morally equivalent to those in Russia. In recent decades, American efforts have been geared toward promoting candidates who challenge authoritarian leaders. Russian efforts, on the other hand, are meant to sow discord.

"We often consider ourselves and hold ourselves out as an example of how other countries should conduct themselves," Mr. Potter said. "When we have internal battles or things have gone wrong here, it is much harder to do that." He added, "Countries can exploit that and say, 'We may be bad, but the United States is no better."

Civilian casualties at highest level in Afghan war

NYT, 10/4— Civilian casualties caused by the long and intensifying conflict in Afghanistan reached a record number in…2019….

Civilian deaths and injuries…increased by 42 percent…this year…the deadliest month since 2009….

The uptick in civilian deaths correlated with the increased number of Afghan and American military operations….

…Afghan commandos supported by American air power's…frequent airstrikes and special operations raids…[are] blamed for causing civilian casualties….United States Air Force documents show that in September alone American aircraft dropped 948 munitions, the most in any month in the last five years….[outpacing] the 7,362 munitions launched in 2018…….The grainy [photo] footage…usually presents only a limited picture of what happens after an air strike.

TWU & MTA RIDE TOGETHER

WORKERS MUST STEER CLEAR OF LIBERAL MISLEADERSHIP

Transit workers need to lead themselves, independent of TWU misleadership.

NEW YORK CITY, October 30—At least 3,000 transit workers protested in the streets in a mass union rally outside the Metropolitan Transit Authority's (MTA) headquarters in downtown Manhattan. Transit workers were opposing the bosses' latest, racist contract offer. MTA bosses offered transit workers miserable two percent pay increases, wanted increased healthcare contributions, more part-time positions instead of full-time, and more years to top pay for new hires. And the leaders of Transport Workers' Union (TWU) Local 100 had no plan to fight back. The rally resembled a festival with blaring music and a slick, self-promoting video. The backup plan was to appeal to Governor Cuomo, no friend of the working class (Wall Street Journal, 10/21).

No "fair contract" under capitalism

Progressive Labor Party members, who are active in the struggle, passed out leaflets and sold over 200 CHALLENGES. We explained that the MTA bosses and the TWU misleaders are both part of the capitalist system and under capitalism there is no such thing as a "fair contract." Workers produce everything and we should receive and distribute everything. And this contract is racist. The mostly Black and Latin transit workers in NYC have the lower wages, compared to their mostly white counterparts at the Long Island Railroad and Metro North.

Those suburban systems move 89 million riders compared to 1.7 billion NYC passengers annually. This racist divide and conquer strategy is how capitalists exploit all workers. Only communism can end this exploitation. Under communism profit would be illegal and the workers would run all aspects of society, never having to beg for crumbs from the bosses again!

A festival, not a fight back rally

This rally resembled a festival more than a call to fight back because the leaders of TWU Local 100 are in bed with the MTA bosses and Democratic Party politicians! There was no fightback feel. One track worker mentioned that the union doesn't even have a list of demands ready. He has no confidence in the TWU misleaders. Their claims that they'll "shut it down" if necessary are false bravado. TWU president Tony Utano has a close relationship with Governor Cuomo, who enacted a new pension tier reducing benefits for newly hired state and local government workers (Reuters, 3/15/12.) Cuomo is the one pushing the MTA's gutter racist fare beating campaign, criminalizing Black and Latin workers—which Utano, strongly supports (New York Times, 6/19). Both Cuomo and the union misleaders are also behind flooding the subways with thousands more kkkops, first to monitor transit workers to catch them "stealing time." Now they blame riding workers who don't pay the fare for cutting in on their profits. Riders are not the enemy of transit workers, the bosses are.

Union misleaders perpetuate sexism and racism

The union misleaders are also going along with the MTA bosses in perpetuating sexism. State and federal laws require breast-pumping stations for women workers, yet the MTA system has none. But the union hacks have reduced this to a bargaining chip, instead of fighting for it everywhere, from the job sites to the courts. Under communism women workers will never be discriminated against because sexism would be illegal.

TWU leaders are not organizing or winning workers to strike. The union isn't strike ready, and not serious about exercising workers' power in any way. The union leadership has shown its own reactionary, racist nature. When a Black transit worker fell to his death two years ago, Utano blamed it on him being "big" rather than blaming the MTA bosses for failing to replace a weak, out of date railing that could not support him. Meanwhile the MTA bosses are sending workers to their deaths. Instead of making cosmetic makeovers to stations they should invest in worker's safety, but they don't.

Our decrepit working conditions and treatment are other issues. Crew rooms are often filthy and unkempt. Transit workers sent to 2 Broadway face the harshest punishments for even minor operational incidents, and the union does little to address this. MTA workers do indeed have the power to shut this city down once they understand that workers don't have to depend on union misleaders or their capitalist politicians.

MTA bosses serve the billionaire bankers

The MTA bosses will always be loyal to the banks they're in debt to. This is why the system is forced to endure racist train and bus service cuts. Subway cars are filthier, because the MTA cut 66 slots for car cleaners last year (The City, 9/10), and they are planning more "terminal car cleaning cuts" through 2023. This is why the ridership will continue to endure fare hikes. The MTA bosses will keep reducing service wherever they can to keep filling Wall Street's pockets. It's typical capitalist greed, and workers are always in the crosshairs. The "progressive" Democratic Party state leadership that is presiding over these cuts is further proof that liberals are no allies of workers.

Fight for communism, working class power

We must understand that the fight for better conditions and pay is intertwined with the larger struggle to destroy capitalism. The ruling class MTA bosses couldn't care less about us. Local 100's ultimate interests lie with them as well. Transit workers are a critical cog in the bosses' profit drive. The bosses love to scapegoat both transit workers and riders. The bosses depend on our division to keep their capitalist system going and their profits flowing.

Communists in the Progressive Labor Party want to unite all workers against all bosses into a revolutionary movement that destroys this racist and sexist system. We are for communism where working class power rules. ✪

SUBSCRIBE or RENEW!

All the communist politics, news, and struggle from around the world!

one-year subscription: $20 individual $45 for institution

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Make check or money order to:
Challenge Periodicals,
PO Box 808, Brooklyn, NY 11202

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM ★ LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO ★ PLP